



HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Democratic Caucus

The Honorable John M. Spratt Jr. ■ Ranking Democratic Member

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Americans Trust Democrats – Not Republicans – on Education Issues

Dear Democratic Colleague:

Nobody should be surprised that Americans trust House Democrats more than Republicans when it comes to providing a high-quality public education. Yet Republicans are concerned by a recent pollster's report that voters think House Democrats are better than Republicans on education issues. A review of the facts proves the voters right.

- ***Republicans Cut New Education Act*** — Both the President's budget and the House Republican budget cut funding for the No Child Left Behind Act, last year's bipartisan reauthorization of the nation's main elementary and secondary education law, by \$90 million from the 2002 enacted level.
- ***Republicans Fail on Commitment to Improve Teacher Quality*** — Both budgets cut funding for teacher quality programs and freeze funding for the state grant program, meaning that the program will hire no new teachers and will train as many as 18,000 fewer teachers next year.
- ***Republicans Divert Funding to Private School Tax Credits*** — Rather than fulfill current needs for education funding — such as special education, Title I, and Pell Grants, which are funded well below their authorized levels — the Republican budgets include a new tax credit for students to attend a private or public school if they were assigned to a failing public school. This tax credit costs \$175 million in government spending and forgone taxes in 2003, and \$3.7 billion over five years (2003-2007).
- ***Republicans Cut Maximum Pell Grant*** — The Republican budgets claim to freeze the Pell Grant maximum award at the 2002 level of \$4,000 (because more eligible students are expected to apply, the budgets provide \$549 million more for Pell Grants for 2003 than for 2002). However, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Pell Grant funding in the Republican budgets will actually cut the maximum award to less than \$3,900.

The pollster urges Republicans to talk more about education. Instead of just talking, Democrats are actually working to improve education for all of America's children by providing qualified teachers, special assistance where it is needed, and access to affordable higher education. The voters know the difference between talk and education results.

Sincerely,

John M. Spratt, Jr.
Ranking Democratic Member